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November 10, 1980

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Ambassadors at Large
All Assistant Secretaries
The Legal Advisor
The United States Representative to the Organization of American States
The Chief of Protocol
The Special Representatative of the President for Middle East Peace Negotiations
The Special Advisor to the Secretary for Soviet Affairs
The Deputy Representative of the President for the Law of the Sea Negotiations
The Director, Office for Combatting Terrorism
The Coordinator for Population Affairs
The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs

FROM: M - Ben H. Read

SUBJECT: Letter of Resignation

It is customary for every career as well as non-career presidential appointee holding an "advise and consent" position or rank to submit his or her resignation at the commencement of the term of office of a newly elected president. I have been asked to remind each such presidential appointee, as well as Chiefs of Mission overseas, of this practice and to request each of you to take the following action.

A resignation letter to President Reagan dated January 20, 1981 should be forwarded under cover of a personal, confidential letter to the new Secretary of State or Secretary-designate. While you may, of course, tailor it to your own style, the brief traditional message generally used has been: "In keeping with established custom, I hereby tender my resignation as (insert your title) to become effective at your pleasure," and every letter should contain that essential point.

As President Carter has made clear it is the policy of his administration to effect the smoothest possible transition. To do so it will be desirable for most of you to remain in your positions throughout the remainder of the Administration. If you decide to relinquish your present responsibilities prior to January 20, 1981, the wording of your resignation letter to President Carter should request that the resignation be effective at his pleasure. Your covering letter to the Secretary should indicate what your preferred timing is.